N° XII.

THE THEATRICAL
CENSOR.

BY A CITIZEN.

Perfection's top, with weary toil and pain,
'Tis genius only that can hope to gain.
The play'r's profession (though I hate the phrase
'Tis so *mechanic* in these modern days)
Lies not in trick, or attitude, or start,
Nature's true knowledge is the only art:
The strong-felt passion bolts into his face,
The mind untouch'd, what is it but grimace?
To this one standard make your just appeal;
Here lies the golden secret, Learn to FEEL:
Or fool, or monarch, happy, or distress'd,
No actor pleases that is not *possess'd*.

LLOYD.

אד תמתכל בקנקן
אלא כתה שישבי

Saturday Evening, February 8.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, and *Henry IV, or the Humours of Sir John Falstaff*, have been brought forward since our last. The former received not much additional interest from the acting of Mr. Fennell, who was unfortunate enough, we understand, to sprain his ancle, on jumping from his triumphal car; a circumstance that might have damped the ardour of the Macedonian hero himself. This accident prevented Mr. F.'s appearance as *Hotspur* on Saturday evening; and Mr. M'Kenzie was kind enough to undertake the part for him! We shall not wonder if, before the end of the season, poor Mr. Taylor should be *kind enough* to undertake the character of *King Richard the III*, and Cain be sufficiently intoxicated to enact *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*.

Wednesday Evening, Feb. 12.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF RICHARD III.

King Richard III, as judiciously altered by Cibber, was represented this Evening, for the benefit of Mr. Fennell. We hope this gentleman derived all the *benefit* his most sanguine expectations could promise him, and that the audience was not wholly dissatisfied with its entertainment. We were surprised to find Mr. Fennell imperfect in a part so familiar as that of *Richard III*, to the meanest amateur of the stage. In this respect, however, he was kindly and ably kept in countenance, each in his several character, by nearly the who e of his colleagues; but, more especially, by Mr. Cain.

The impatience of this last gentleman's neglect, so reasonably testified by the house, must have been extremely mortifying to Mr. Fennell, who might be considered as the host for the evening, and for whose sake it were to be wished that the curtain had dropped amid tokens of general approbation; but, in so far as regards Mr. Cain, there is no foundation for regret. We trust that he will discover from this evening's experience, that the Philadelphia audience, long-suffering as it is, cannot always be slighted with impunity.

In Mr. Fennell's *Richard*, we saw little beside that mediocrity which we have before spoken of, as usually characterising his performances. *Richard III*, still more than *Othello*, is a swelling, showy, part; and, still more than this latter, free from all manner of difficulty. We begin to suspect that we have very much misapplied our time in detecting the false emphases which Mr. F. employs; we pronounce, once for all, that he discovers very little judgment on this head. Setting these errors out of the question, we find, on every new representation, the same verdict in our minds, that he speaks well, but has little power of awakening the passions. His "wooing" of the *Lady Anne*, displayed an agreeable flexibility of voice, but not much of the persuasive power: it was the wooing of an actor on the stage, not that of a real suitor. The tent-scene, in which *Richard* lies asleep during the appearance of the *ghosts*, is, perhaps, the principal one in which any remarkable acting can be displayed; and, here, Mr. F. was not happy in his efforts to portray the broken slumbers of a haunted murderer. He tossed and tumbled, it

must be allowed; but, this might have happened after too full a supper: there was no appearance of agony or horror. On the whole, Mr. Fennell was a very respectable *Richard;* but, not a very fine one.

Mr. Cross was altogether deficient in dignity:—" so much for *Buckingham!*"

Mr. Cain's carriage and gesticulation have more singularity than grace; but, pardoning these, and his utter negligence in learning his part, he was sometimes not unentitled to applause.

Mrs. Wood seemed to conceive her part much better than she was able to act it. She dropped the sword well. We observed little else to praise. We heard it remarked, that she had left her handkerchief behind the scenes. This could not be objected to Mrs. Morris. Mrs. M. deserves the little praise it was possible to earn, as *Duchess of York*. Mrs. Wignell's *Queen* was entitled to full commendation.

We must upon no account neglect to offer our praise to Master Durang, who played the *Prince of Wales* with a degree of excellence rarely to be met with in so young an actor, and who, on all occasions, evinces a share of taste which would do credit to those who are much older. We recommend it to Master D. to form an early determination to look to nature alone for the models upon which he ought to form his talents. If he should do this, he may become an actor of great merit; but, we confess, that his situation is not favourable. He is in danger of growing up in the mere imitation of those humble examples by which he is surrounded. Master Jefferson, too, shall have his praise. These are not the days for neglecting *Infant Rosciuses*. Master J has not been taught to do justice to the speech in which he addresses the *Duke of Glocester:*

> You mean to *bear* me, not to bear *with* me:—
> Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
> Because that I am little, like an ape,
> He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

Master J. should have spoken with more of shrewdness than open insolence.

In the tent-scene, we were disappointed by the omission of the words " despair and die," which SHAKESPEAR has put into the mouth of each ghost, and which, through their uniform repetition, have a very impressive effect.

RAISING THE WIND.

In the representation of this agreeable farce, the whole of the performers appeared in a very favourable point of view. Mr. Jefferson almost forgot his usual propensities, and gave us, upon the whole, a passable *Didler*. If, at the next opportunity, Mr. J. could contrive that a little more of the gentleman should be discernible through the holes in his coat, we should like his performance still better. The little, gold-laced, cocked hat must have been taken up in a moment when Mr. J's ruling passion had the mastery.

Mrs. Francis's *Miss Durable*, and Mr. Francis's *Plainway*, were good pieces of acting. Mr. Blisset does not succeed in the Yorkshire dialect; but we find no other fault with him.

The Editor of the *Repository* says that HORNBOOK is a *hard author*.

[We are exceedingly thankful for the following communication. The Pæan, in its complete state, must be *unique;* but, though, taken altogether, we venture this opinion, we must observe that some of its passages strongly remind us of compositions which we have seen in various respectable Journals.]

MR. CENSOR,

You are, perhaps, not fully aware of the spirit of poetry and *prosaic* composition which prevails in this city at present. I assure you, Sir, that I find iambics and lyrics in every kennel. They are, in general, I am sorry to say, so *foul* and *imperfect*, that I can make neither head nor tail of them; a complaint, which I am told you often make of the best. However that may be, I have this morning picked up a PÆAN which I have no doubt is the production of some one or more of the Pæan-writers mentioned in your last Number; and which, as a model, I the more anxiously commit to your care, because I suspect that some of the critics who have flourished in the papers do not exactly understand what a PÆAN is.

Yours to command,

SCAVENGER [not SCALIGER].

FRAGMENT OF A PÆAN.

I. 1.

Shout, Philadelphia! Iö pæan sing!
Shout, Philadelphia! ev'ry Fool go shout!
With wild delight awake the Theban string,
Rave, rant, write, rattle, make a roar and rout!
Critics now no more
Shall grumble as before;

But, their brows awhile
Relaxing in a smile,
And parting with their gall,
And eyes, and sense, and all,
Join in the cry,
And rend the sky
With pæans and loud eulogy!
* * * * * * * * * * * * *

I. 3.

He comes! the "godlike" hero comes!
Stop your ears, we'll break their drums!
* * * * * * * * * * * *
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II. 1.

See, where the ghost of Hamlet stalks!
See, where buried Denmark walks!
Yes! now I see (and as I see I stare)
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, there!
Gods! I may go and tell the town
I've Hamlet Prince of Denmark known!
Words in ears have never rung,
Words have never pass'd the tongue,
More fine, more swelling, more sublime!
Yes, I see * * * * * *

—But the reader is to see no more.

NOTES.

But, their brows awhile
Relaxing in a smile.] This smiling of the brows is a beauty of the first order.

He comes! the "godlike" hero comes!] There seems reason to believe that the *whole* of this line is borrowed.

See where the ghost of Hamlet stalks.] The transition in this stanza, from the Ghost of Hamlet, to Hamlet Prince of Denmark, is truly Pindaric.

NEW READINGS.

"Stop *your* ears." The propriety of this emphasis is unquestionable; for, it would be very wrong to exhort us to stop other people's ears: beside, there is in this line "a perfect antithesis:" "Stop *your* ears, we'll break *their* drums;" meaning, &c. &c. &c.

See, *where* the ghost of Hamlet stalks!

Here, also, the new reading must have a decided preference; since it would be unpardonable to leave us in doubt whether the poet would or would not have us look for the ghost *where* it is!

If we are to judge from the number of epistles we have received in his behalf, Mr. Harwood has the good fortune to possess very nume-

rous friends in this city. We have received a variety of communications on the subject of his infrequent appearance on the boards, some of them accompanied with language not a little violent toward ourselves:

—with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war.

We insert the following, which is just come to hand, not so much because it is better written, as because it is shorter than the rest. It is conceived in a style of laconism which pleases us extremely; and which, if generally adopted in this town, would at least *lessen* the number of mis-spelled words, and the quantity of outlandish language.

MR. CENSOR,

The public wish to know the reason Mr. Harwood is kept back.

CIVIS.

"A B C."——NOAH WEBSTER.

Courage, Mr. Censor, do not be afraid of inserting at least this one letter of mine more, though your former kindness has brought down upon you, I fear, the "red, right arm" of the *Repository*. It is true that the threatened vengeance is slow, but I tremble lest it should not be the less sure. As to the length of time which the good folk take for *digesting the matter*, you must not found any hope of comfort upon that: it is a thing of course, as I observed in my last letter, that such productions as P's and his colleagues, should not be the work of an odd half hour. In the mean time, my Dear Sir, how have you slept?—I was sorry to see the doctor going into (for I should be thought a sad sort of a fool if I were to say I was sorry to see him coming *out of*) your house; but, I hope you will soon be yourself again.

The decorum of last Saturday's *Repository* was exemplary; but, though this is a good sign, I hope you will not suffer it to shut your ears against the dictates of my fierce resentment. Depend upon it, Sir, this humiliation is only temporary: you have

—— scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.

Alas, Sir! I talk of resentment, but there is nothing of the kind in my nature; and, if there were, I could not entertain it upon so slender an occasion as that of the *peccadilli* of the *Repository*, a publication that, in spite of all that my dear LEANDER has suffered from it, I more love than hate. Were it not for this strong hold which it has on my affections, do you think I could have used it so gently as you have seen me?

Sir, I repent, for my own share, and I think you ought to do the same for yours, that the sly trap was laid for P, concerning those "pæans of eulogy." It was not altogether fair to set him to spelling a heathenish word like this. These things should be left to learned gentlemen, and the very learned Journals. But P. was as near the mark as ought to have been expected. He boldly stands up for pæans, and, after a little gibberish about "comprehensive merits," &c. suggests that not only Mr. Fennell, but the critics also, provided they are of the

right sort, ought to have their "reciprocal *pæns* of eulogy." Nay, he grows not a little vain-glorious upon the occasion; and, after talking about "*Othello, Moor of Venice*," a personage, of whom we have never before had the honor of hearing, tells us we, "believe ourselves enabled "to eulogize in a very enlarged manner." This belief, I suspect, is formed upon what some reckon the true principle of believing: *Credo quia absurdo.*

But, Sir, having passed over, with more rapidity than I can pardon in myself, the beauties of the former Number, I must recur to that, and pay very little attention to the present. I shall not attempt to conceal, however, with what regret I lay aside a sheet containing so many pleasant passages; and I live in the hope of yet doing them justice. In the mean time, with great deference, I submit to P's reconsideration, whether he have not been "tainting the discipline" of Cassio, in talking of his "*corporal* system?" The man bore the commission of *lieutenant*; and was duly tenacious of his rank: "The *lieutenant*," said he, "is to be saved before the *ancient*;" and, behold, P talks of "Mr. M'Kenzie, and his *corporal* system!"

Sir, there are occasions upon which we are tempted to say,—

> Can these things be,
> And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,
> Without our special wonder?

and such an occasion is the present! P tells us that when Mr. Fennell appeared in *Zunga*, "the fool was elevated, and shouted the thunder-"ing plaudits of inexpressible delight—the wise viewed with astonish-"ment, and attentively regarded the godlike dignity of a man, whose "magnanimity could conceive the sanguinary inclinations of a soul, "bent wholly on the dictates of the fiend of hell, Revenge." There, Mr. Fennell! there is a pæan for you! This is after DETECTOR's own heart!—But, between you and I, there wants a little of that charity to which I made pretence in my former letter, not to believe that there is some lurking malice in this singular counter-coupling of the words *fool* and *wise*,—*delight* and *astonishment*; some indecent allusion to the line—

> Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile;

or, to the converse of this proposition:

> *O'erlook'd, seen double*, by the *fool* and *wise*;

or, to the following still more inapplicable passage:

> Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
> Whose darling passion was the lust of praise;
> Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
> Women and FOOLS must praise him, or he dies;
> While list'ning senates hung on all he spoke,
> The CLUB must hail him master of a joke!

These pæan-writers remind me of unlucky children, who, taking but too good instruments into their puny hands, maim and murder their best beloved friends.

I have a few words to add to this letter, respecting my motto. I have chosen it as at once the sum and summit of my own pretensions, and a most worthy object of ambition to P, and J, and Moses, and the rest.

More last words. In my first letter was a quotation, beginning, "Compliments *effusing*." It should have been "*Complaints effusing*." This was a mistake of your compositor, very natural, indeed, considering my pot-hooks and hangers. Let it be believed, that as it is above my capacity, so it is beside my aim, to *improve* upon the *Repository*. HORNBOOK.

MR. CENSOR,

I Have the goodness to inform the subscribers to the *Repository and Ladies' Weekly Museum*, that the same cannot appear before Monday. The answer to the *Theatrical Censor*, which will occupy three pages, is of so elaborate a nature that the writers and printers will be under the necessity of working on Sunday, or the work must be still further delayed. Inform them, also, that it is a most choice production, the very essence of all the brains of the club; and that great pains will be taken with the spelling. Mark my words! I-SPY-I.

IMPORTANT!!!

Alas, most gentle reader, we had very nearly misused thee exceedingly! The ODE with which we promised to ravish thee this week was just about to be printed off, when we learned that the copy we possessed was only the *seventeenth* draught, and that scarcely a hemistich remains unaltered in that which is considered as complete. We stopped the press. No words can describe our consternation. To give thee a false copy, and to give thee none at all, equally revolted our punctilious feelings. What would have become both of thee and us, we scarcely guess; but, while we were striding up and down our garret, tortured with the difficulties of our situation, a second friend arrived, bringing us the perfect piece. This also we had incontinently given thee, but that a third came in time to apprise us that a warm controversy had arisen concerning a word in the fifth line of the first stanza; and which controversy is adjourned till after Monday, when the parties hope to have less business on their hands. The principal speakers in the debate are Solomon Slender, Esq. and M, who turns out to be one *Moses*. The question is, whether the line shall stand—

And write down all *detractors;*

or,

And write down *malefactors:*

meaning, in both cases, the *Theatrical Censor*. Solomon Slender, Esq. insists on this, that if the words run—

And write down *malefactors,*

there will be an inconceivable pleasantry in the equivoque which must necessarily strike every reader: for, who will see—

And *write down* malefactors,

and not think of—

And *down right* malefactors?

The price of this work is 50 cents for four numbers. To be had at No. 42, Walnut-street, and at Mr. Phillips's Circulating Library, south Fourth-street. Communications, and orders from the country, received at the former place.